



## **SUMMARY GUIDE TO BALLOT QUESTION ADVOCACY** **R.I.G.L. §17-25.2**

Effective June 27, 2006, Chapter 25.2, hereafter cited as “*Rhode Island Ballot Question Advocacy and Reporting Act*”, was added to Title 17 of the General Laws of Rhode Island.

This document summarizes the campaign finance reporting requirements for a ballot-question advocate. This document does not represent the entirety of the new statute and should be used as a guide only.

The purpose of this Act is to separate reporting requirements for ballot-questions from political campaigns. Political Action Committees (PACs) will no longer be formed to advocate the approval or rejection of a ballot question.

Nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to limit the amount of monies contributed to or expended by a ballot-question advocate for the purpose of ballot-question advocacy.

Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 17-25.2-3 Definitions:

- ◆ **Ballot-question** means any question, charter change, constitutional amendment, referendum or voter initiated petition place on any state, district, city, town or municipal ballot for a general or special election.
- ◆ **Ballot-question advocacy** means advocating the passage or defeat of a ballot question.
- ◆ **Ballot-question advocate** means any person making an expenditure with a cumulative total that exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in a calendar year for ballot-question advocacy on a particular ballot question.

Every ballot-question advocate shall file periodic reports with the Board of Elections:

**WHAT TO FILE:**

The forms prescribed by the Board are as follows:

- ◆ “*Summary of Ballot Question Advocacy Activity*” (Form BQA-1)
  1. Name of Ballot Question Advocate
  2. Contact information of Ballot Question Advocate
  3. Names and Addresses of Endorsing or Member Organizations that authorize the use of their names
  4. The Question whose approval or rejection intended to be advocated
  5. The Reporting Period
  6. Total amount contributed this period & total amount expended this period
  7. Certification of responsibility
- ◆ “*Schedule of Contributions For Ballot Advocacy*” (Form BQA-2)
  1. Name, address and place of employment and date of receipt of each person making a contribution(s) that in the aggregate exceeds \$1,800 per election cycle
  2. A ballot question advocate advocating the passage or defeat of any gambling question shall also indicate whether or not any person making a contribution(s) that in the aggregate exceeds \$1,800 per election cycle has any direct or indirect affiliation with any entity or person that operates or owns any type or kind of gambling facility or entity in any jurisdiction, and, if so, the name of such facility or entity.
- ◆ “*Schedule of Expenditures For Ballot Advocacy*” (Form BQA-3)
  1. Name and address of every person or entity receiving an expenditure for ballot question advocacy, which in the aggregate exceeds \$100.
  2. Newsletters and other communications paid for by an organization to its own members need not be reported.

**WHEN TO FILE:**

- ◆ The first report must be filed for the period beginning when the ballot-question advocate expends a cumulative total that exceeds \$1,000 for ballot-question advocacy and ending the last day of the first full month following such date, to be filed with the Board no later than seven (7) days after the end of the month.
- ◆ Thereafter, calendar months reports are required to be filed due no later than seven (7) days after the end of the month.
- ◆ In lieu of filing for the last full calendar month preceding the ballot question election, a report must be filed due no later than seven (7) days before the election.
- ◆ A final report must be filed no later than thirty (30) days after the election.
  1. Any contributions received for ballot-question advocacy and remaining with a ballot-question advocate that exceeds \$1,000 and have not been expended shall be disbursed in one of four (4) specified ways.
- ◆ The ballot-question advocate must annually report by June 30 of the calendar year any such remaining contributions and shall report distributions of any such remaining contributions within thirty (30) days of such distributions.